GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN

Published Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

(The National Geographic Society is a scientific and educational Society, wholly altruistic, incorporated under the Federal law as a non-commercial institution for the increase of geographic knowledge and its popular diffusion.)

General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

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Photograph by George Shiras 3d. © National Geographic Society.

TWO WINGED CITIZENS OF ALASKA

These featherless cormorants are eight days old. Their smooth and shining backs and blunt heads cause them to resemble turtles.

HOW TO OBTAIN THE BULLETIN

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Alaska: Prize Package for the United States

OPENING the new Seward to Fairbanks railroad in Alaska, which cost $53,000,000 to build, recalls that, just fifty-five years ago on March 30, the United States purchased Alaska from Russia for $7,000,000. In the intervening years we have taken from the Territory more than seventy times the seven millions of purchase money.

Most Americans are in the habit of thinking of Alaska as of insignificant area, yet it is as large as Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Missouri put together, with sizable bits from Kansas, Nebraska, and the two Dakotas added on.

To most people, also, Alaska is visualized as a land of snow and ice, of glaciers and scant vegetation. In point of fact the Alaskan climate is fairly diversified, and along the coast there are slight extremes of cold and heat. In the interior there is less rainfall, and the long Arctic day produces a very dry and warm climate.

As Well Located as Norway and Sweden

Everywhere, except in the extreme north, the vegetation is luxuriant, its growth is rapid, and fruits, vegetables and grazing grasses flourish. Located no less advantageously than the Scandinavian Peninsula and with an area almost twice as great as that of Norway and Sweden combined, Alaska, nevertheless, has a white population of little more than 50,000 as against the eight millions of Scandinavians.

The three great sources of Alaskan wealth are minerals, fisheries and furs. Up to the end of 1915 the mines of Alaska had produced more than $300,000,000. In 1916 the fisheries produced nearly $20,000,000 and the peltries more than half a million. There are great deposits of coal as yet untouched and of low-grade ores more precious which await only the development of the Territory's own water power to make them available at tremendous profit.

Spruce Valuable in Airplane Making

Forests, too, are extensive and suited for the production of both timber and wood pulp. The heaviest growth lies along the coast, where two national reservations contain a combined area of about 21,000,000 acres with an existing stand of merchantable timber exceeding eighty billion feet, board measure. These forests comprise the northwest extremity of the great northern belt of conifers which spans our continent, and Alaskan spruce has been found valuable for the construction of the wooden frames of airplanes, for which use it commanded during the war the remarkable price of nearly $150 per thousand feet.

In recent years Alaska has attracted attention as a producer of meat for exportation to the United States. This meat is derived from reindeer herds which graze on the mosses and grasses of the far northern part of the Territory which at one time was considered worthless and unproductive. The Alaskan reindeer herds now contain more than 200,000 of the animals, all derived from the 1,280 reindeer imported into Alaska by the Federal Government 28 years

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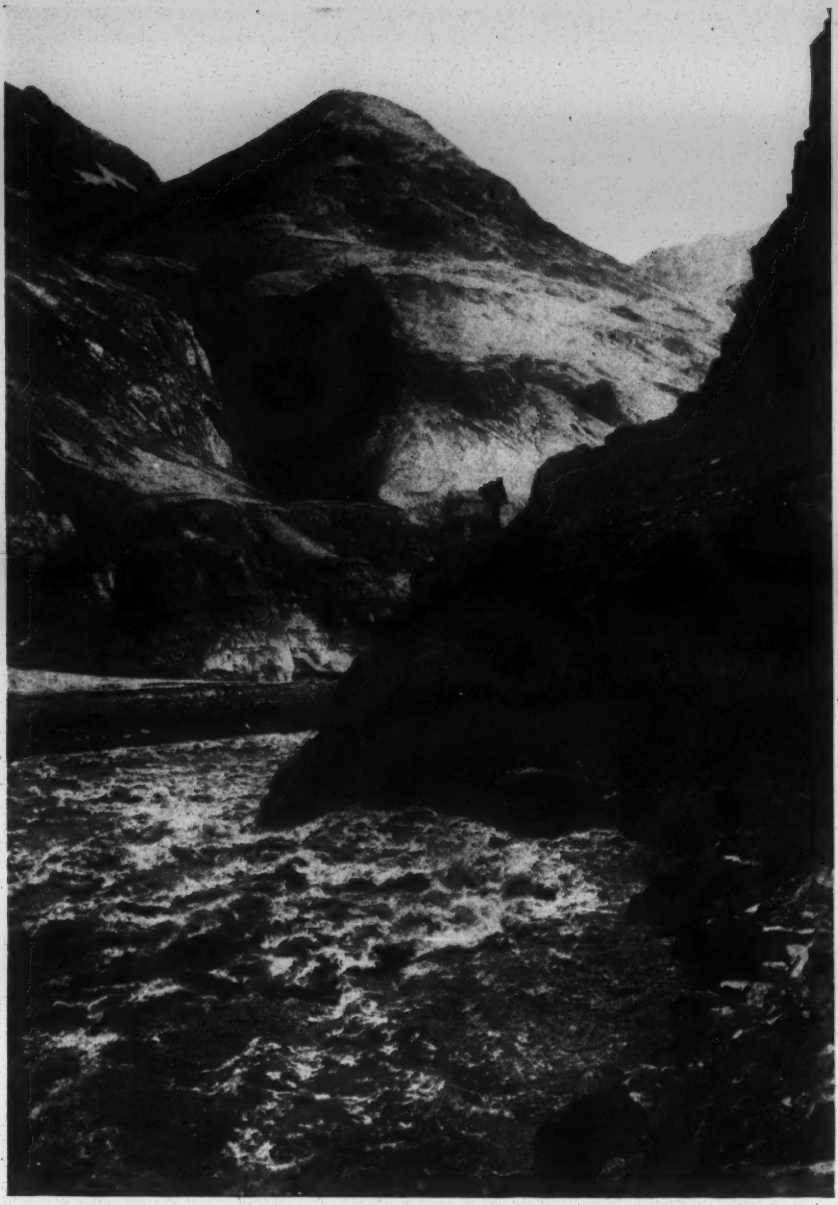

Photograph by D. B. Church. © National Geographic Society.

CLIMBING OUT OF MT. KATMAI CANYON, ALASKA

This is one of the many natural wonders of surpassing grandeur in the Katmai volcanic region which have been made known to the world through the explorations and discoveries of National Geographic Society expeditions. The wall here is as high as parts of the Grand Canyon, as beautifully colored, and as precipitous (about 4,500 feet).

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Robert E. Peary, the Man

APRIL 6 already stands in history as an epochal date—anniversary of the victory which crowned a battle of nearly four centuries when, thirteen years ago, Robert E. Peary "nailed" the Stars and Stripes to the North Pole.

The human and humane qualities of the great explorer are described in a communication to the National Geographic Society by Donald B. MacMillan, a lieutenant on Peary's successful Polar expedition.

The National Geographic Society had a part in supporting Admiral Peary's expeditions, and awarded him its special gold medal. Mr. MacMillan says:

"Ever kind and thoughtful and considerate of his young and inexperienced men, he treated them as a father would treat his sons. He helped us lash and pack our sledges, untangled and repaired our frozen and knotted traces.

Fatherly Care of His Men

"When struggling along far in the rear, with refractory dogs and heavy loads, an Eskimo would often be detailed to relieve us of a part of our load and pilot us safely across an open lead, and if we arrived with frost-bitten face, it was often the Commander's warm hand that brought the blood back to the surface.

"I well remember falling through the ice at 59 below zero. With sealskin boots filled with water and rapidly stiffening clothes, I arrived at our encampment of snow houses. He beat the ice from my bearskin pants, pulled off my boots, and wiped my feet and legs with the inside of his warm shirt. And when covered with blood, a heavy 40-82 bullet having passed through my arm, into my shoulder, and out through the back, clipping the side of one finger, he remarked: 'I would much rather had that thing happen to me than to you!'

"This does not sound like 'martinet' or 'tyrant' or 'unkind to his men.' His last words to Marvin, lost on the return, 'be careful of the leads, my boy,' is characteristic of the man.

Enthusiasm Brought Success

"If one word was written large upon the face of every man and upon the walls of every little stateroom in the steamship *Roosevelt*, it was the word enthusiasm, which may be translated into good leadership; for we felt our strength and our knowledge in Arctic matters increasing day by day and beheld an equipment being perfected which we knew must win.

"Is it any wonder, then, that we as assistants, when we heard the blowing whistles of Sydney, Nova Scotia; beheld the line of craft circling out to escort us into the harbor; saw waving flags and docks black with people, should be almost sorry that he had won out?

"We knew that never again would we have the honor and the pleasure of serving under such a leader."

ago. In this period, besides, many thousands of the animals have been slaughtered for food. It is estimated that the portions of Alaska unsuited for other industries will maintain four to five million head of reindeer. In the Scandinavian countries their meat is highly prized. The reindeer meat from Alaska is beginning to appear regularly now in many of the meat shops of the United States.

Transportation Facilities Greatest Need

The development of the lumber industry, like that of all other enterprises in Alaska, is largely dependent upon the extension of communications, especially by rail. The railroad just completed will open up the country for both travel and industry. Four hundred and fifty-seven miles of this road had been in operation for some time. Only 83 miles remained to be constructed to give this road its total trackage of 540 miles.

Alaska was not taken into the Federal domain without much criticism. None of it, however, reached the height of invective with which eastern statesmen had condemned the Oregon Territory at an earlier period, though the later prophets of ill have been as deeply confounded as the others. The price paid seemed entirely out of proportion to the benefits to be derived; and even those who were inclined to favor the project as a means of demonstrating good will to Russia for her unswerving friendship during the Civil War found scanty argument in supporting the payment of what then appeared so huge a sum.

None of them could foresee that in a single year—and that almost within a generation of the time of purchase—Alaska would yield nearly 1,000 per cent upon the purchase price then paid—for in 1916 the value of exports of minerals and merchandise from the Territory amounted to $68,618,656.

It is to Seward's foresight and persistence that the United States owes this opulent outpost. The final diplomatic action which consummated the bargain was as precipitous, almost, as that which gave to us later the title to the Panama Canal Zone—for the treaty was drafted, signed and submitted to the Senate within but little more than twelve hours. By its terms we took over an area equal to nearly one-fifth of the whole of the continental United States of today; an area which lay fallow for a full generation after it came into our hands and whose progress in the last twenty years has been from rugged primitiveness to bustling modernism in every locality where even slight energy has been expended. What the next fifty years of American rule in Alaska may produce is limited only by the imagination which the progress of the last half century may call up.

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Christmas Island: Where the Sun May Yield a Secret

CHRISTMAS ISLAND, in the Indian Ocean, one of the several bits of land that lonely voyagers have come upon in the holiday season and have named accordingly, may play an important part in the further checking up of the Einstein theory, according to press reports from London. The Royal Observatory at Greenwich and the University of California both are planning expeditions there to observe next September's total eclipse of the sun. A Dutch astronomical party may also install its instruments there.

Christmas Island has been described by travelers as at once one of the loneliest and loveliest spots in the world. And its possession of tree-climbing crabs and a superscented tree gives it a right to be classed as one of the queerest.

Island Is Top of Ocean Mountain

Java, its nearest neighbor to the north, is 250 miles away, the little Cocos Islands lie more than 600 miles to the west, Australia is 1,000 miles to the southeastward, while to the south the waters of the Indian Ocean are unbroken by even the smallest islands until the lands around the South Pole are reached at a distance of nearly 4,000 miles. The island, 12 miles long by 9 miles broad, is in reality made up of the slopes and top of a huge mountain peak. Soundings show that if the waters of the ocean were drained away a rough pyramid 15,000 feet high would stand alone in a plain, the present island forming the last 1,000 feet of its slopes.

The island is believed to be unique in that it is probably the only tropical island capable of sustaining a considerable population which had never been peopled until after Europeans discovered it. Except where sheer rock walls occur it is heavily wooded from the water's edge to the summit. Coconuts and sago palms as well as many other tropical trees grow in profusion. Beneath them is a tangle of tropical undergrowth, but in this jungle are no wild beasts and only a few harmless reptiles.

Infested by Tree-Climbing Crabs

But one pestiferous creature is omnipresent—a wicked-looking red crab. Some of these creatures attain a size of 9 inches across the back. They do not confine themselves to the shore sands, but range all over the island, and always in groups. Sometimes armies of them march along. They even climb the trees and feast on the succulent nipa palms. As an offset to the crabs the island, unlike practically every other tropical land, is mosquitoless. This boon it owes to its porous soil and steep slopes. Even in the rainy season there is no standing water.

For one of its features Christmas Island may be said to be infamous rather than famous. It is a tree, believed not to exist elsewhere, which is described by one disgusted visitor to the island as emitting "the most disagreeable odor in the world." With a trunk as sturdy as an oak and leaves as graceful as those of an aspen, it gives to the eye no indication of its true character. But its scent permeates the air for hundreds of feet in every direction; and if one is unfortunate

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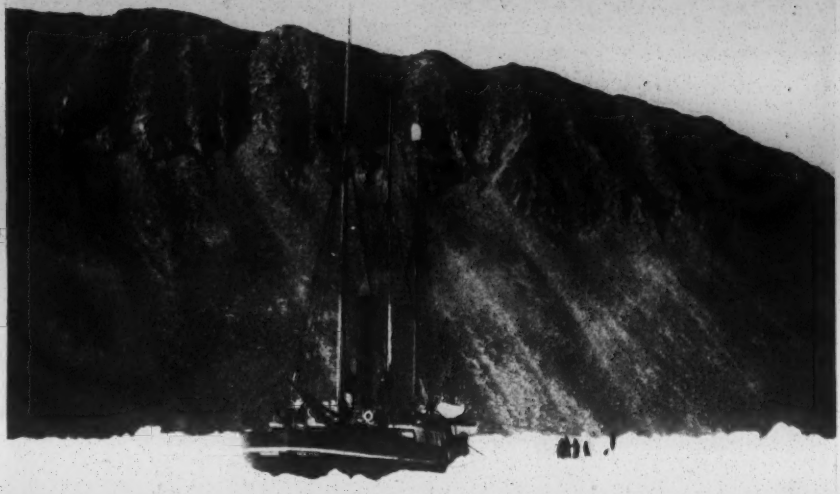

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PEARY'S ARCTIC SHIP "ROOSEVELT" ICE-BOUND IN ROBESON CHANNEL

The Roosevelt was 184 feet long, 35.5 feet broad, 16.2 feet deep, with a gross registered tonnage of 614 tons. The frames of the hull were of oak; the planking was double, yellow pine inside and oak outside. Its engines developed 1,000 horse-power, driving a single eleven-foot propeller. In addition, it carried fourteen sails, with a sail area somewhat less than that of a three-masted coasting schooner of the same size.

"For The Increase and Diffusion of Geographic Knowledge"

IF YOU have been to Washington you have seen the beautiful buildings at Sixteenth and M Streets—the Administration Offices and the Library, which constitute the home of the National Geographic Society.

The National Geographic Society is a scientific and educational society, wholly altruistic, incorporated under Federal law as a non-commercial institution for the increase of geographic knowledge and its popular diffusion.

The Society has *increased* geographic knowledge in many notable ways. It sent an expedition to the world's largest volcano, Mt. Katmai, in Alaska, which led to the discovery and subsequent explorations by The Society of the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, which reminds one of a million locomotives puffing out rainbows of steam.

Previously, The Society sent a series of expeditions to Peru to look for traces of the Inca race, and there found a New World Babylon, Machu Picchu, with its marvelous gardens, probable birthplace of the potato.

The finest of the giant California Sequoia trees, oldest and biggest living things, were saved from the sawmill by contributions of The Society and its friends, and The Society helped make possible the finding of the North Pole by support given Admiral Peary's voyage.

At present The Society is conducting extensive explorations among the giant apartment houses of New Mexico, abandoned, long before Columbus came, by some unknown race. Finding out about this mysterious people has all the fascination of a detective story.

In the *diffusion* of geographic information, The Society's organ is the *National Geographic Magazine*, which not only is read in the 700,000 homes of its members but also is used in many thousands of schools because of its beautiful and instructive pictures and its readable and reliable articles.

Realizing its responsibility among the youth, The Society has established certain means of diffusing geographic information in the schools, of which the GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN is one, and a series of loose-leaf picture sheets, known as the *Pictorial Geography*, is another.

Its book publications, such as "Scenes from Every Land," "The Book of Birds" and "Wild Animals of North America," are widely used in schools, and its beautiful panoramas and new maps, which go to members with their *National Geographic Magazine*, have been ordered for framing by many thousands of schools.

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Voodooism in Haiti

AS NO ACCURATE history of Haiti can be written without a reference to Voodooism, the story of this strange cult, which some authorities say still is in practice in its most violent form among the people of this island and others of the West Indies, may be interesting in connection with the current discussion of American occupation in Haiti.

Voodooism could scarcely be called a religion, but so strong is its influence upon the superstitions of the negroes, that despite efforts to eradicate it, every year or two dispatches report that there has been a sudden outbreak of cannibalistic practices in connection with a revival of devotional enthusiasm.

Possessing Information May Be Dangerous

It is said that no white man would be allowed to live long after he had given testimony leading to the conviction of a culprit charged with sacrificing a child to his god. As a consequence, authentic information is difficult to get, and proof of a human sacrifice almost impossible. Many teachers and inhabitants of the islands deny the existence of the cult, though stories of the horrors perpetrated at a meeting of the Voodoos are recorded by naval officers who have visited the islands, and by other men of integrity.

The general belief is that Voodooism was brought to the Western Hemisphere from West Africa by the negroes imported as laborers, especially to Haiti, and it may probably be traced back to the serpent worship of Egypt. Many of the characteristics of the worship also were attributed to the French "witches" of the fifteenth century, the most violent phases of the practice, perhaps, being an outgrowth of the African superstitions of the black and of the French imagination of the white inhabitants of Haiti.

Believe God Manifest in Form of Snake

The god Obeah or Vaudoux, of which Voodoo is an American corruption, is supposed to know, to see and to do all things, but to manifest himself to his worshipers only in the form of a nonpoisonous snake and communicates with them only through a priest and priestess, known as papa-loi and maman-loi, who are held in great veneration by their followers.

The ceremony is always held at night, usually in the fastness of some deep wood, where there will be no interruption of the rites. The devotees take off their shoes and bind about their bodies handkerchiefs, the predominating note of which is red, and the priest and priestess wear red bands about their heads in the form of crowns. Then they pray to the snake, which is exhibited for the purpose of arousing their emotions. Maman-loi mounts the box in which the god is usually kept and emits groans, shrieks, and wild gesticulations as she utters her prophetic sentences.

A Primitive Reaction to "Jazz"

A dance closes the ceremony. The king puts his hand on the box and a shudder somewhat similar to the effect produced by the most recent kind of

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enough to so much as touch its bark or leaves, nothing short of repeated scrubbings with strong carbolic soap will make him again fit for human society.

Has Rich Deposits of Phosphate

Rich deposits of phosphate of lime occur on Christmas Island, a fact to which it owes such importance as it possesses in non-eclipse years. A phosphate company regularly takes shiploads of the mineral from the island to Singapore where it is marketed as fertilizer. More than 1,000 coolies, mostly Chinese, are engaged in the mining operations, and with the overseers, Sikh police and company agents, constitute the island's made-to-order population. The island is a British possession, having been annexed in 1888 after the discovery of the rich fertilizer deposits.

Christmas Island has been chosen as the chief observation point for the 1922 eclipse of the sun because it is not only in the belt of totality, but the sun will be obscured there at a time when it is high in the heavens. The pencil of shadow in connection with which scientists are basing high hopes will be touched to the earth in Abyssinia, will be drawn over narrow Italian Somaliland, and from there onward will trace its way almost entirely over landless portions of the Indian Ocean several hundred miles south of the Asiatic mainland. It will cross Australia mainly in the unsettled northern regions and will be lifted in the neighborhood of Norfolk Island northwest of New Zealand.

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"Patent Medicines"

PATENT MEDICINES, the taking of which is a peculiarly American habit, usually are not "patent," sometimes are not medicinal, and certainly are not new, according to John A. Foote, M. D., who writes to the National Geographic Society as follows:

"The patent-medicine business in England, viewed as a distinct trade monopoly, really took definite form during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Both Elizabeth and James I abused this assumed arbitrary power of granting monopolies of various sorts, until great discontent was produced amongst the people.

"The Statute of Monopolies, passed in 1624, regulated all such grants, placing authority in the hands of Parliament. The period of duration was likewise limited to 14 years. In the beginning, specifications of methods or formulas were not required; but during the period of Queen Anne applicants began to be required to file these specifications. As secrecy was an important element in the success of nostrums, this ruling tended to discourage the patenting of medicines until by 1800 medicinal compounds were patented but rarely.

Few Preparations Really "Patented"

"Of course, the term 'patent medicine' nowadays is a misnomer, as few of these preparations are patented. The property right is protected by copyrighting the label or registering it as a 'trade-mark,' thus preventing competition in the use of the name of the preparation.

"The oldest patent preparation still made in large quantities in Great Britain is probably Anderson Scot's Pills, patented under King James II in 1687. Formulas of these pills appeared in all the manuals on pharmacy published in Europe and America in earlier days. Their activity depends largely on aloes. Duffey's Elixir, invented by a clergyman, the Reverend Thomas Duffey, in Leicestershire, in 1675, is still advertised and sold, and the old-fashioned advertisement in which the bottle is wrapped states that the elixir was 'much recommended to the public by Dr. King, physician to King Charles II,' an argument somewhat belated, to say the least.

"Harlem Oil, a turpentine compound, made first in 1672, and Godfrey's Cordial, a preparation of opium, advertised first in 1722, are still bought by the public.

Paid 5,000 Pounds for a Prescription

"Goddard's Drops was a remedy to which Salmon, a contemporary of Charles II, refers as 'the true medicine which was purchased of the Doctor by King Charles the Second, so much famed throughout the whole Kingdom and for which he gave him, as it is reputed, fifteen hundred pounds sterling.' Other writers state that Charles paid 5,000 pounds for the formula.

"The formula consisted of a distillate 'of humane bones or rather scales,' which were to be 'well dryed.' These were distilled until 'a Flegm, Spirit, Oyl, and Volatile salt were obtained.' The product was digested in the earth

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"jazz" seizes him, and from him it passes to all the rest. Then the devotional exercises evolve into a delirious madness under the cover of drunkenness and night.

The initiation of a convert to the faith is enough to inspire him with terror. He pledges himself, when his lips are touched with warm goat's blood, never under any circumstances to reveal the secrets of the fraternity and to kill any member who proves a traitor to the brotherhood. This is the point at which the cannibalism is supposed to occur, but investigation has shown that many of the shocking phases of the worship have been eliminated, and the worshipers usually satisfy themselves with a cock or a goat, which is afterwards cooked and eaten.

Strong Men Literally "Scared to Death"

The Voodoo women are thought to possess supernatural power, and by working on the superstitions of the natives attain a potent influence over them. Many strong men have pined away merely because they thought an enemy had "put Obeah" on them, just as the Southern negro believed in the "conjure" doctor who cast a "spell" on him by leaving in his path a bottle containing horse hairs, snake's teeth, lizard claws, a piece of dried rat, and a frog's foot. Objects which have been used in the practice of the black art may be seen in the Museum of the Petit Seminaire at Port au Prince.

So deeply have the people of Haiti become imbued with the cult that an empty bottle, which probably would entice a reminiscent grin from an American assembly, will throw a Haitian group into consternation, and educated Haitian girls have been known to faint at the sight of the uncanny shivers of spilled mercury.

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VIEW OF THE GRAND RUE: PORT AU PRINCE, HAITI

The character of the architecture of the capital city of Haiti is admirably shown in this picture. The rickety boardwalks spanning the gutter give a hint of primitive conditions.

for three months, digested at a gentle heat for 14 days, and the 'oyl' separated and bottled.

"Animal products were much used in medicine from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. Dried mummy was a favorite remedy. The importation of mummy was an industry of some commercial importance and several writers of that day caution against the use of spurious mummy, giving directions as to what distinguishes the good from the poor product.

Early Experiments in Substitution

"There was much substitution here, and one Jewish dealer was found to have done an extensive trade in bodies dried in imitation of the genuine article.

"Even the English Parliament has been gulled by the 'cure-all' vendor. In 1739 an act was passed 'providing a reward to Joanna Stephens upon the proper discovery to be made by her for the use of the publick of the medicines prepared by her for the Cure of the Stone.'

"The formula, when published, consisted of a solution of the products resulting from calcining egg shells and garden snails. An alkaline vegetable decoction and some pills made from calcined snails and some burned vegetable drugs comprised the 'cure.' Horace Walpole is said to have taken this awful mess in the belief that it helped him. Lime water would have been just as efficacious."

Bulletin No. 5, March 20, 1922.

Photograph by Donald B. MacMillan. © National Geographic Society.

AK-KOM-MO-DING-WA EATING MEAT IN THE USUAL MANNER OF THE SMITH SOUND NATIVE

"Let there be no doubt as to Peary's popularity in the Far North," writes Donald B. MacMillan. "Absolutely square and honest in all his dealings with these black-haired children of the Arctic, firm, but ever just and kind in all his relations, he remains to them as the great 'Nalegak,' a leader or chief among men." (See Bulletin No. 2.)